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BECKHAM'S HAVING A BALL

THE FORMER SOCCER STAR'S FINDING HIS SECOND CAREER AS FASHION TRENDSETTER A NICE CHANGE OF PACE PAGE 11

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HAIL TO THE COACH

Saskatchewan Roughriders head coach Corey Chamblin holds the Annis Stukus Trophy as he is named the CFL coach of the year in Ottawa on Wednesday. Story, page 13. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

CN, union's tentative deal nixes strike

Labour. Premier had urged feds to step in with potential walkout slated for this Saturday

CN Rail and the Teamsters union have reached a tentative contract agreement, averting a potential strike by 3,000 workers that could have come as early as this weekend.

The deal on Wednesday came shortly after the federal government announced it was preparing legislation to prevent the strike, following concerns in Saskatchewan that a walkout would severely hurt the province's agriculture industry.

CN and the Teamsters said late Wednesday that details of the three-year contract won't be released until it is ratified by union members.

Teamsters spokesman Stephane Lacroix described the negotiations as a "bit chaotic," but said CN came to the union with a series of proposals late in the day. He added he hopes union members will ratify the agreement this time.

Premier Brad Wall had called on Ottawa to step in before a strike even began.

In a letter to federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt earlier on Wednesday, Wall said a strike would be unacceptable at a time when farmers are already having trouble moving a bumper crop of grain.

"Our agricultural producers deserve better than to be held hostage by one organization at a time when there is already tremendous frustration with the rail system's failure to serve their needs adequately," the premier wrote.

Lacroix noted that federal Labour Minister Kellie Leitch's announcement that Ottawa was preparing back-to-work legislation had likely moved things along.

The union's strike notice came days after Teamsters members, representing conductors, train employees and yard workers, rejected a tentative contract reached with CN last fall.

Leitch said a strike at Canada's largest railway would hurt farmers and the forestry sector.

CN said it transports about $250 billion worth of goods annually for a wide range of business, including natural resources and consumer goods.

A strike by competitor Canadian Pacific Railway in 2012 lasted just days before Ottawa legislated workers back on the job. THE CANADIAN PRESS
WITH FILES FROM ROSS ROMANIUK

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NEWS 1

Not enough infrastructure cash to go around: Wall

Funding. Communities across the province are feeling the crunch

Premier Brad Wall says there will not be enough money to fund all the infrastructure projects that Saskatchewan municipalities want.

Mayors and councillors told the premier and cabinet ministers at the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association convention on Wednesday that infrastructure demands are high and costly.

Wall said the province is waiting to see what might come from the federal government's Building Canada Fund and will match any of that money.

"There will likely be projects for which municipalities have earnestly pointed out the need, that we simply won't have enough. We won't have that vast amount of dollars that are needed to deal with all of them," the premier said.

"There'll be some projects, I'm sure, that we wouldn't be able to fund. Without knowing specifics, I think that should be taken as a given."

Premier Brad Wall, left, addresses delegates about infrastructure issues and other matters at the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association conference at Evraz Place in Regina on Wednesday. Standing at the podium is Regina city Coun. Mike O'Donnell. SARAH TAGUIAM/METRO IN REGINA

The premier said infrastructure is a priority, but the government also has to balance the budget. It's scheduled to be tabled March 19.

A growth plan unveiled by the government in 2012 should, in the meantime, give communities a good idea on what projects should come first, such as sewer and water, Wall said.

Association president and Weyburn Mayor Debra Button is concerned about what projects might not go ahead.

"Municipalities across this province have been dealing with the infrastructure deficit for a lot of years and we've been prioritizing and we're getting to a crunch with a lot of our projects," she said.

Button said her city of Weyburn was told that it needed a new water reservoir before it could build a new subdivision. The reservoir will probably cost around $11 million.

Weyburn is feeling a housing crunch as oil and gas develops in the area and draws workers. Button said there's no guarantee the city will get money from the Building Canada Fund.

"So what are communities like Weyburn supposed to do if there is no help from the other orders of government? That's a huge tax increase for us."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hot topic: Sochi safety

With mounting security concerns about the upcoming Sochi Winter Olympics, Metro spoke to residents in the province's two largest urban centres to find out if they feel Saskatchewan athletes will be safe while they go for the gold.

SARAH TAGUIAM AND MORGAN MODJESKI
saskatoon@metronews.ca

Aidan Searle, 24, chef, Saskatoon

"I think there's a lot of kerfuffle about nothing, really. The whole world has its eyes on the country so I don't think anything serious is going to happen — unless you're gay, I guess, but we'll see what happens."

Ashley Weiss, 23, homemaker, Regina

"I definitely think they have to be worried about it, of course. But then again, people like to lie and scare. Yeah, we should take it in consideration that they have to be careful, but you never really know if they will follow through. I'm not really big into the Olympics but I wish Canadians well."

Duane Flockhart, 54, unemployed, Saskatoon

"It's not just Saskatchewan athletes, but athletes from everywhere. There is a big concern about the safety and with the Saskatchewan athletes you have to worry. They say they're doing everything they can and I hope that's the case, that they will be safe."

Nesar Sikder, 44, restaurant worker, Regina

"I think there's nothing to be scared about. There are a lot of security systems in place there. It can happen anywhere, but I don't think anything bad will happen. I do hope they win, though!"

Paola Chiste, 41, research officer, Saskatoon

"I think if they ventured off the beaten path and were openly displaying some behaviours that perhaps the Russian people and the Russian government don't support, then I think they wouldn't be safe, but I think if they stayed within the parameters of the Olympic Village they will be safe."

Bridging the Gap between the injury and the athlete

Active participation. The Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association delivers support for sport

MORGAN MODJESKI
morgan.modjeski@metronews.ca

On the move

"The whole time you're doing it, people are actually having fun — but they're getting stronger."

Mike Bacon, sports mentor for Bridging the Gap

Participants of the Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association's Bridging the Gap program can be seen playing wheelchair rugby at Saskatoon's City Hospital during a weekly session last month. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO

The Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association is giving people with new spinal cord injures a re-introduction to the world of athletics.

Through its Bridging the Gap (BTG) program, patients in the Saskatoon Health Region and community members living with new injuries have the chance to try a number of wheelchair sports like wheelchair basketball, rugby and tennis.

Leanne Schellenberg, the BTG provincial coordinator, explained the program encourages patients to become engaged in physical activity before they leave the hospital, giving them the information, tools and support they need to try a new sport.

"Some of these people were probably very physically active before (their injury) and they're just not aware of the programs and sports that are available to them," she said, noting the program can also help with a person's recovery.

"It's important just for their physical fitness," Schellenberg said.

"They lay in bed a lot when they first come in and then they have to start going through all these therapies, so we like to think of Bridging the Gap as free therapy … because they don't really realize how hard they're working here."

One of the BTG sport mentors, Mike Bacon, a silver medalist paralympian in the sport of wheelchair rugby, said participation in the program could help during an injured person's transition into their new life.

"The whole time you're doing it, people are actually having fun — but they're getting stronger," he said.

"They're getting more used to the function they have now, so hopefully every little bits is helping them regain some of that independence, so they can get back to life."

BTG holds weekly sessions every Thursday at the City Hospital Gymnasium.

Take a shot and bid on this spirited event

John Villenga, president of Slava Ultra Premium Vodka, with his wife and business partner, Katherine. At this year's King of Kovbasa event in Saskatoon, Villenga will return to host his Vodka Experience taste test. COURTESY SLAVA ULTRA PREMIUM VODKA

Glass is in session. Unique vodka experience returns to Saskatoon's King of Kovbasa event

There is more to vodka than ordering bottle service at the club.

John Vellinga, president of Slava Ultra Premium Vodka, is an aficionado of the alcoholic beverage.

"We want to show people that there's as much of a difference between brands of vodka as there is between types of red wine or Scotch whiskies," said Vellinga.

For the past three years, Vellinga's Ontario-based company has partnered up with the King of Kovbasa celebration of Eastern European sausages in Saskatoon to auction off his Vodka Experience.

This year's event takes place on Feb. 6 at Prairieland Park and all proceeds are donated to the READ Saskatoon literacy organization.

"It's been going for a couple thousand dollars every time," said Vellinga.

"People are looking for unique experiences. Everyone drinks vodka in something, whether it's a Caesar or a martini," he said. "But almost no one knows anything about it."

Drink it all in

- Successful buyers of The Vodka Experience along with 25 guests receive a taste test of premium brands, instructions on how to mix perfect drinks as well as a lesson in the history and science behind the 600-year-old spirit.
- The activity has been used for training liquor board professionals, corporate social functions and even private parties, Vellinga added.

While Vellinga is a Canadian entrepreneur, his distillery plant is located in the historical birthplace of vodka right in the heart of present-day Ukraine.

"The level of expertise is just staggering," he said.

The Vodka Experience is only available through charity auction, which is a creative approach to marketing Villenga said he learned from Saskatchewan businessman W. Brett Wilson on the Dragons' Den TV show.

JACOB MORGAN/METRO

Vets. Medical discharges lead to 'area of unfairness'

Some Canadian soldiers given medical discharges find they don't qualify for benefits because Veterans Affairs uses different, more stringent criteria in an "unfair" process, the military ombudsman told a Senate committee Wednesday.

Pierre Daigle, whose term ends in a few weeks, testified many ex-soldiers have to fight to prove the conditions that made them ineligible to serve are a result of their service.

Once released, Veterans Affairs demands the ill and injured be subject to a separate assessment above and beyond whatever examination has been conducted at National Defence. For veterans, it can be a bureaucratic conundrum that often leads to a denial of benefits and a lengthy appeals process.

"This is an area of unfairness which needs to be looked at," Daigle said.

Daigle said he has had heard from former members directly, even though his mandate doesn't extend to Veterans Affairs, and told senators one individual described the process "as the equivalent of being pushed off a cliff." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Arturo. Polar bear unlikely to make move to Winnipeg

Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park Zoo says a polar bear living in an Argentinian zoo will probably have to stay there.

People have been protesting the treatment of Arturo, a polar bear at the Mendoza Zoo. With temperatures drastically warmer than what a polar bear is used to, and a lack of quality facilities for the bear, protesters say the bear is not doing well.

The Assiniboine Park Conservancy has been in talks with the zoo to get Arturo transferred to the Assiniboine Park Zoo, but the APC said Wednesday it's unlikely to happen.

Arturo the polar bear will likely have to stay in Argentina, where protesters say he's being mistreated. HANDOUT

"It does not appear that a Canadian import permit can be issued for Arturo," the APC said in a statement.

ELISHA DACEY/METRO IN WINNIPEG

Tories take on military procurement

New system, strategy. Plan aims to fix years of botched military purchases that have left government's fiscal reputation in tatters

The equipment needs of the Canadian military will be assessed with a more skeptical eye under the Harper government's new system of defence procurement.

The strategy, released Wednesday, puts greater emphasis on arms exports by developing policies to "support international sales opportunities."

The plan introduced by Public Works Minister Diane Finley and Defence Minister Rob Nicholson is meant to fix years of botched military purchases.

"Folks, I am pledging to you today that we are going to be managing things different and better," Finley told an audience of mostly defence contractors and lobbyists at an Economic Club of Canada breakfast.

A series of delays and failed plans to re-equip the military have been a recurring embarrassment for the Conservatives.

The auditor general's bruising 2012 assessment of the plan to buy 65 F-35 stealth fighters left the government's reputation for good fiscal management in tatters.

"We know there have been issues in the area of defence procurement and we're not going to just wish these problems away," Finley said. "Canadians have every reason to expect more from their government."

The new strategy introduces an independent challenge function within National Defence that will question the need for each major capability.

Affordability, especially in the face of declining defence spending, has been a key problem in many of the botched programs. The Conservatives have been repeatedly surprised by the price tags of some projects when it comes time to open the bids.

Another cornerstone of the plan will be consultation with defence industry contractors before projects go out the door. National Defence will begin posting an annual list of its equipment needs, beginning in June.

The new system will also see increased co-operation among Defence, Public Works and Industry officials under an umbrella secretariat at Public Works. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winter weather causes massive pileup on Ontario highway

Rescue workers attend the scene of a multi-vehicle pileup on Highway 401 westbound near Trenton, Ont., on Wednesday. Ontario provincial police said via Twitter that the accident was over a kilometre long and had closed down the highway. OPP said about 25 tractor trailers and 10 smaller vehicles were involved in the string of collisions as many roads in eastern and southern Ontario were covered in snow from the substantial snowstorm.

JUSTIN CHIN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Environmentalists call government's plan to review pesticides a 'victory'

Environmentalists are declaring victory over a federal government announcement that it will conduct a health review of 23 pesticides, including a weed killer found everywhere from wheat fields to suburban lawns.

But they point out the decision comes only after several lawsuits were filed last summer and suggest it shouldn't take legal action to get Ottawa to follow the law.

"It is a victory in that sense, that we're getting them to do something they've never done before," said Elaine MacDonald of the environmental law group Ecojustice. "But we shouldn't have to sue them to get them to do it."

Last August, four lawsuits were filed over 29 chemicals, all of which Ecojustice said were banned in Europe. The federal government is obliged by law to review chemicals that are banned in any country belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Health Canada had originally declined to do any studies. It said some of the chemicals had been recently examined and found to present acceptable risks. The agency added that it wanted to consider reasons for the European bans before conducting studies on the others.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency quietly reversed that decision in a website posting dated Dec. 30.

"The (agency) … has determined that this subsection's criteria have been met, namely that a member country of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development prohibits all uses of this active ingredient for health or environmental reasons."

Four of the six chemicals Canada won't review were found to be still in limited European use, restricted to functions such as anti-flea dog collars. The final two are not used in Canada.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver

Court sees video of 'Good Samaritan' beating during Stanley Cup riot

A man dubbed a Good Samaritan because of his efforts to fend off looters during Vancouver's Stanley Cup riot has told the trial of four of his alleged attackers that he suffered injuries for nearly three weeks following the attack.

Robert MacKay was assaulted on June 15, 2011, outside a department store in Vancouver. In a video that was played in court, a group of people are seen grabbing MacKay and punching him until he is knocked to the ground.

Ioannis Kangles, Michael MacDonald, Carlos Barahona Villeda and David Leonati are charged with assault and for participating in a riot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec

Family drama claims the life of 11-year-old girl

An 11-year-old girl has become the fourth person to die in a family drama that police believe was triggered by a possible love triangle.

Beatrice Godin died Tuesday night after being in critical condition since the weekend. She was one of the two daughters of Martin Godin, who police say is the prime suspect in the deaths.

Provincial police say the 54-year-old man was taken to hospital Saturday night after the slayings of three people, including his other daughter, 13-year-old Medora.

The other people who died were Godin's ex-wife, Nancy Samson, and her boyfriend, Benoit Daigle.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rome. United Nations report urges Vatican to come clean on abuse

Pope Francis greets the faithful as he arrives for his weekly general audience at the Vatican on Wednesday. ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Vatican "systematically" adopted policies that allowed priests to rape and molest tens of thousands of children over decades, a UN human-rights committee said Wednesday, urging the Holy See to open its files on pedophiles and bishops who concealed their crimes.

The UN committee severely criticized the Holy See for its attitudes toward homosexuality, contraception and abortion and said it should change its own canon law to ensure children's rights and their access to health care are guaranteed.

The Vatican promptly objected and its UN ambassador accused the committee of having betrayed the international body's own objectives by allowing itself to be swayed by pro-gay ideologues.

The report, which took the Vatican by surprise in its harsh tone, puts renewed pressure on Pope Francis to move decisively on the abuse front and make good on pledges to create a Vatican commission to study sex abuse and recommend best practices to fight it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sochi security beefed up

Winter Olympics.
Russia's law-and-order president not taking terrorist threat lightly

President Vladimir Putin pointed Wednesday to the Boston Marathon bombings as a big reason for the intense security around the Winter Olympics starting in Russia this week.

The Chechen brothers accused of the 2013 Boston attacks hailed from just a few hundred kilometres away from the Olympic sites at Sochi.

Twin bombings in another southern Russian city in December have heightened terrorism fears around the Sochi events.

Intelligence agencies from multiple countries will be working together around the clock at a special headquarters in Sochi, Putin said while visiting Olympic sites Wednesday.

"In the U.S., people died at a marathon, during the G8 there were terrorist acts in the London subway," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signs a wall at the Coastal Cluster Olympic Village on Wednesday in Sochi. ALEXEI NIKOLSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Putin rose to power and popularity 15 years ago on law-and-order, hard-on-terrorism policies that critics say go too far and suppress human rights. He had long warned the West about the dangers posed by Chechen rebels, and urged closer security co-operation with Washington after the Boston Marathon attacks.

Putin has made security central to the Olympic project, in which he has taken an unusual personal interest.

Despite criticism and higher costs than any Olympics in history, Putin said Wednesday that "Russia is ready to host the Games." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Backlash

Protests over anti-gay laws intensify

A U.S. Olympic sponsor and a UN panel condemned a Russian law criticized as a stifler of gay rights as protests took place around the world Wednesday.

The law signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin in July bans pro-gay "propaganda."

Detractors have pressed the International Olympic Committee and its corporate sponsors to denounce the law and call for its repeal. One of those sponsors, McDonald's, was targeted Wednesday by protesters in London and Paris. Protests also took place in St. Petersburg, Russia; New York, Jerusalem and Rio de Janeiro. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suspect in drug case had Hoffman's phone number

At least one of four people taken into custody on drug charges during an investigation of actor Philip Seymour Hoffman's suspected fatal heroin overdose had the actor's cellphone number, two law enforcement officials said Wednesday.

Investigators zeroed in on the four after a tipster, responding to publicity about Hoffman's death, told police he had seen Hoffman at the lower Manhattan apartment building where they were arrested on Tuesday and he believed that's where Hoffman got the heroin, the officials said.

After obtaining search warrants for two apartments in the building, police found about 350 packets of heroin in one of them, the officials said. They also learned from phone records that one of the suspects had Hoffman's number, strengthening the theory that they may have supplied him with drugs, the officials said.

Some of the packets found in Hoffman's apartment were variously stamped with the ace of hearts and others with the ace of spades. Those found in the building where the arrests occurred had different brand names, including Black List and Panda, the officials said.

A couple adds to the flowers placed outside the apartment of actor Philip Seymour Hoffman in New York on Tuesday. RICHARD DREW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police were still waiting for a cause of death for the Oscar-winning actor from the medical examiner's office, which said on Wednesday that more tests were needed.

There was no timetable for Hoffman's autopsy to be finished, said medical examiner's office spokeswoman Julie Bolcer, who declined to discuss the pending tests. Toxicology and tissue tests are typically done in such cases.

Hoffman, 46, was found dead Sunday with a needle in his arm, and tests found heroin in samples from at least 50 packets in his apartment in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, law enforcement officials have said.

The four suspects face charges of criminal possession of a controlled substance. Two also face charges of criminal possession of drug paraphernalia.

A private funeral for relatives and close friends of Hoffman is set for Friday, and a larger memorial service will be held later this month.

On Wednesday night, Broadway theatres dimmed their lights in memory of the Tony Award-nominated actor.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Economy. Tories' budget may lead to short-term gain but long-term pain: NDP

The New Democrats say the governing Conservatives' rush to balance the books could delay the economic recovery from the recession.

NDP finance critic Peggy Nash says cuts and austerity measures risk slowing the economy and maintaining higher unemployment, or even increasing it.

She says her party wants to balance the books as quickly as possible, but not at the risk of putting the brakes on the economy.

Nash says the NDP have some inexpensive ideas for next week's budget, including reversing the controversial cuts to Veterans Affairs from the previous budget.

They also want the government to cap ATM and credit-card fees, saying consumers shouldn't have to pay two or three dollars to withdraw their own money from bank machines.

The New Democrats are also asking for measures they say will create jobs, such as providing a $1,000 tax credit to small businesses to offset the costs of hiring a new worker, at a cost of about $113 million.

NDP finance critic Peggy Nash THE CANADIAN PRESS

The NDP were not the only ones doling out criticism.

Duff Conacher of the group Democracy Watch spoke out against the push by the NDP saying the only way to protect consumers from gouging is to impose limits on big-bank profits.

Conacher says capping ATM fees or providing more free banking options will only push the banks to find other ways to increase the cost to consumers.

Even if fees are capped, banks will find a way to make money elsewhere, said Conacher.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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Dow Jones: 15,440.23 (-5.01)

Community input

Feds to tighten cell-tower rules

Ottawa says it is tightening laws governing construction and placement of new cellular antenna towers to require consultation with communities on all commercial installations, regardless of height.

The changes update the government's 2008 policy that mandated consultation only when companies planned a tower taller than 15 metres.

Industry Canada in a statement said placement of the sometimes unsightly infrastructure is becoming "ever more divisive."

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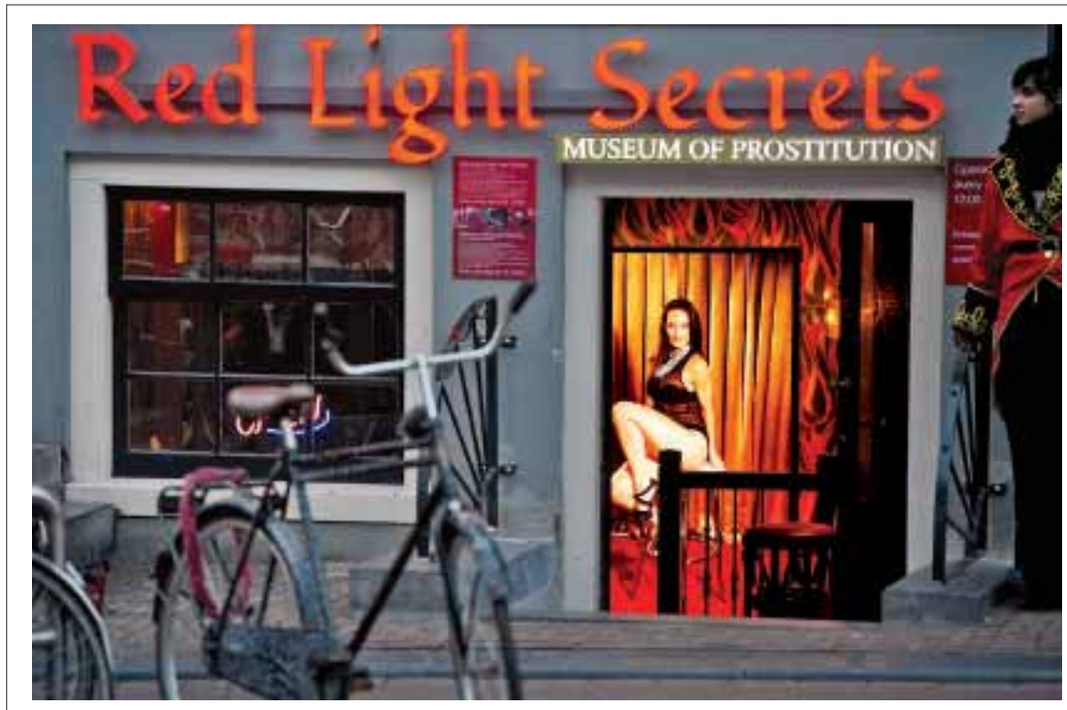


Hands-off approach to learning about world's oldest profession

In this photo taken Tuesday, a hologram of a beckoning prostitute is shown at the entrance of the "Red Light Secrets" museum in Amsterdam. On any given evening, thousands of tourists stroll down the narrow streets of Amsterdam's famed Red Light District, gawking at ladies in lingerie who work behind windows, making a living selling sex for money. Now a small educational museum is opening in the heart of the district that aims to show reality from the other side of the glass. Organizer Melcher de Wind says the Red Light Secrets museum is for those who want to learn more about how the area works without actually visiting a prostitute. EVERT ELZINGA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Time to hog pork?

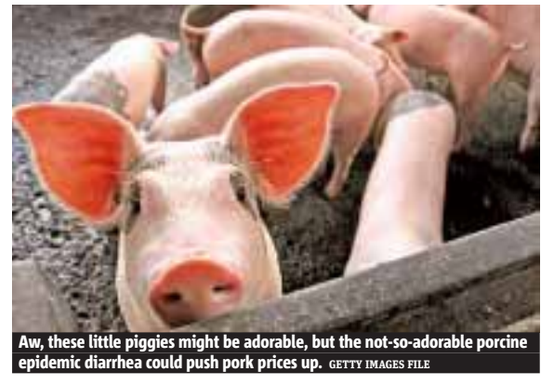
Oink, oink. No need to be a pig by hoarding bacon, but the price of your fav cut of meat may rise slightly due to virus sweeping North America

SCOTT TAYLOR
Metro in London, Ont.

The virus that's rippling its way across Ontario pig farms could hit pork lovers' pocketbooks if the spread continues.

While no one's forecasting a blockbuster spike in bacon prices anytime soon, each new case of the ever-so-charmingly-named porcine epidemic diarrhea pushes the chances one step closer.

Prices have already seen a bit of a nudge thanks to the virus's spread in the U.S., which has been battling the bug since the spring. There, more than 2,600 cases of the virus have been confirmed in 23 states, according to the latest data from the American Association of Swine Veterinarians.



Aw, these little piggies might be adorable, but the not-so-adorable porcine epidemic diarrhea could push pork prices up. GETTY IMAGES FILE

"Their herd has been reduced quite a bit by it, so the supply down there has lowered and that's driven the price up on the futures," said London, Ont.-area hog farmer Jim Denys.

"It all depends on how it plays out in Ontario, whether we can contain it to the sites we have now or if it blows up like it did in the U.S.

"If it does, it may affect the price further."

By June, bacon in urban U.S. supermarkets had jumped to nearly $5 a pound, about 15 per cent higher than the same time in 2012, according to government data. End-of-year data shows a 20 per cent price jump per pound, although some of that can be attributed to the bacon craze that swept North America in 2013, sources have said.

Canada's situation was beginning to look more dire Wednesday with two new confirmed cases. It pushes the total to seven Ontario farms, plus three at sites including a processing plant and a truck-loading facility.

Local cut

People like Voula Sakellis, owner of London, Ont.'s Ribs Royale, are begging people not to let porcine epidemic diarrhea quell their passion for pork.

- Bacon, ribs and anything else cut from a hog remains perfectly safe to eat, she stressed.

Ontario Pork spokeswoman Mary Jane Quinn said the virus could end up costing the Canadian pork industry up to $45 million if it spreads as it has in the U.S.

But, she said, it's important to keep a level head because domestic prices won't increase overnight.

"We do get a lot of American pork coming into the country. I suspect there will be a bit of an increase there," she said, "but in terms of domestic Canadian pork, I don't think you'll see any change (soon).

"You have to give it quite a few cycles. I don't think you'll see it for a few months."

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HEEL EDGE OF TECH DEFENDS EBOOKS

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

I'm not really on the cutting edge when it comes to technology. I've spent a lot of my life living in the past (also known as New Brunswick), so I'm more like the back part of the knife that you push on when you're slicing.

Google tells me that part is called the spine, which still gives me too much credit, society-wise. The middle part is the heel. That seems about right.

I am on the cutting heel of technology.

So when I say that I believe ebooks are far superior to regular books and will one day replace them, don't take it as a bold pronouncement of Things to Come. Take it as a sign that smarter people than me have likely been saying it for years, and now that it's occurred to me it must be more mainstream than Leno.

Until recently I was among those who felt that paper books were unquestionably superior. Ebooks weren't great when they first hit the market, which gave us traditionalists cover as we pointed out that the battery or lights or selection or cost weren't very good.

It was like we looked at the Wright brothers' rickety plane at Kitty Hawk and scoffed: "No way that thing is going to get 350 passengers from Vancouver to Hong Kong on an overnight flight. What were they thinking?"

But now that ebooks have long-life batteries, easy-to-read screens, excellent selection and good prices, people in the pro-book camp have resorted to a couple of paperweight arguments.

The first, from people who have not tried ebooks on principle, usually involves what might to go wrong — like deleting a book or running out of power. These problems are so unlikely that it's like saying a horse is preferable to a car because horses never accidentally deploy their airbags.

The second, more popular argument is that there's "just something" about books. The smell, the feel, the heft, the look. We are judging the book by its cover, and we'll caress it and smell it like it's Ryan Gosling or Scarlett Johansson, thank you very much. All well and good, except there is nothing intrinsically pleasant about the feel or smell of a book. I like those sensations too but it's only because I associate them with book reading and therefore feel positively about them. If it was all about heft we should just carry around five-pound Ps and Qs. "Don't mind these, they're fun to lift." (Besides, my e-reader has a cover that smells just fine.)

Paper books aren't going anywhere, any more than globes and vinyl records are, and all reading is good. But I think books will become curios and hobby pieces while ebooks will dominate the mainstream completely.

I've thought of starting a business that sells blank paper books (one per household) so families will still have something to grope and sniff as they read, but I'm sure someone else has already thought of it. So said the heel.

I suppose I could take a page out of their book but, well, you know.

ZOOM

Don't have a cow, man — have two

ALL PHOTOS 2014 SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

Cattle race carnage gets a photo finish

Yongsheng Zheng's photograph gives us a glimpse into Indonesia's adrenaline-fuelled festival of Pacu Jawi (cow racing).

The annual event sees brave jockeys grab the tails of a pair of cows and skate across muddy rice fields barefoot while balancing on a wooden plank.

The Minangkabau people of West Sumatra have been marking the event for 400 years to celebrate the yearly end of the rice harvest season.

Zheng's photo made the World Photography Organisation's shortlist of the 2014 Sony World Photography Awards.

Pictured to the right are a few more of the nominees.

METRO

Sophie Gamand's Wet Dog is a series of portraits of dogs in mid-bath, photographed half a second before they shake their fur.

Louise Porter submitted this photograph of young men from the Kara tribe in Ethiopia.

Clickbait

ANDREW FIFIELD
andrew.fifield@metronews.ca

Did you know that there are people in Sochi aside from reporters cracking wise about a half-finished insta-city? There are athletes there too, and they seem much happier to be there. Follow these Canadians on Instagram to see for yourself.

CONTRIBUTED

Charles Hamelin:

A three-time medallist short-track speedskater who also happens to excel at the Maniacal Selfie In A Crowd event. He even got close enough to snap a photo of Vladimir Putin joining a Japanese athlete for a dining hall selfie. The caption calls him Vladimir Poutine. A genuine mistake or a potentially dangerous gag? Neither? Charles Hamelin: Enigma. (/charleshamelin)

Travis Gerrits:

A freestyle skier boasting a silver medal from the 2013 FIS World Championships, Gerrits represents Canada in one of the Games' most photogenic sports. And if soaring skiers frozen in time doesn't sound like your kind of thing, he also has a very handsome dog. (/travisgerrits)

Canadian Olympic Team:

Since things have yet to officially kick off, the official feed is a patriotic mix of athletes looking chuffed in shiny new Olympic merchandise or athletes looking chuffed after success in Vancouver. But once the festivities are on, it'll be hard to beat the access. (/cdnolympicteam)

Twitter

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A petition has been started to remove a lifelike sculpture of a man in his underwear from a woman's college campus in the U.S. Should Sleepwalker stay or go?

@PorcelainTear I can understand why that such statue would cause a stir. It looks very real & somewhat disturbing for that reason

Comments

RE: How Far Would You Go For Free Breast Implants? Published online Feb. 5, 2014

If you have left over money, please donate to sick and starving kids around the world, not for shallow people who only care for their look.

Kim, posted to metronews.ca

"I would feel more confident" — for a month or two, that is, until you find something else about your body that makes you insecure.

Al_Gee, posted to metronews.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: saskatoonletters@metronews.ca

metro

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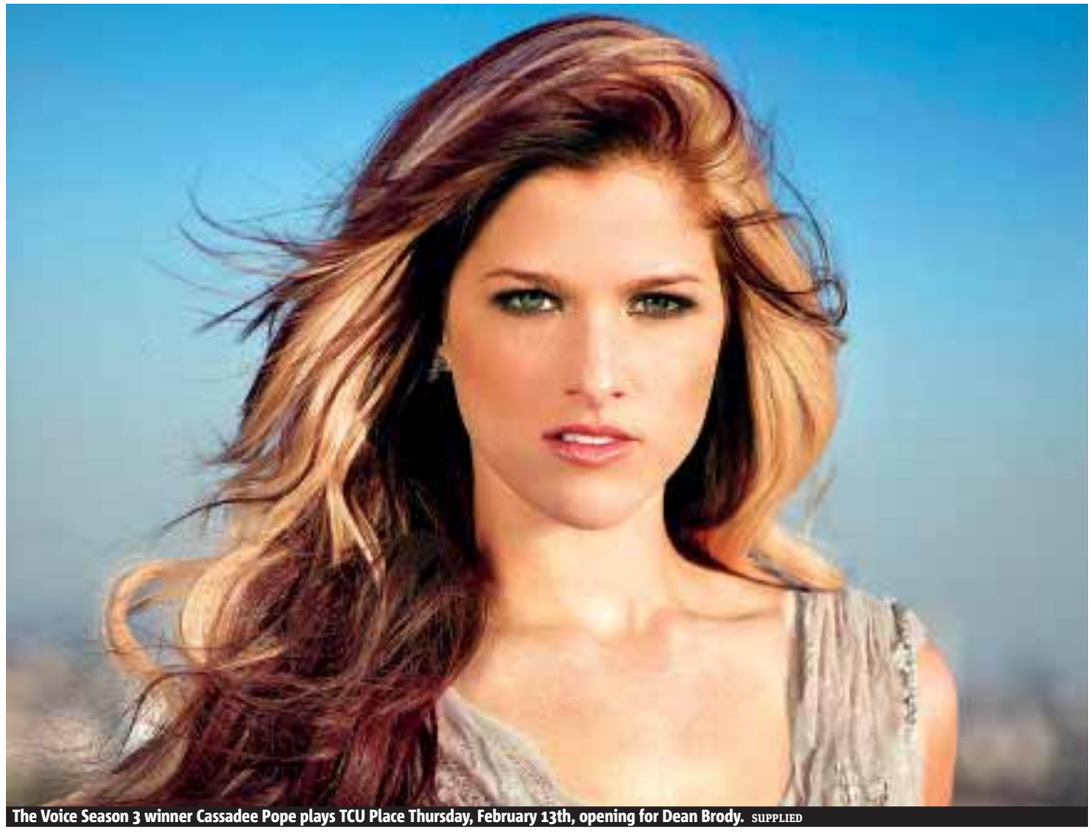
How Pope found her Voice

Long road to stardom. Country music starlet had many ups and downs musically before winning talent show and knocking PSY off the top of the charts

BACKSTAGE PASS
Simon Hiatt
saskatoon@metronews.ca



The Voice Season 3 winner Cassadee Pope plays TCU Place Thursday, February 13th, opening for Dean Brody. SUPPLIED

If like many people in North America, you experienced the symptoms of Gangnam Style fatigue in late 2012, due to overexposure to Psy's hit on YouTube, the radio, television and at sporting events, you may owe Cassadee Pope a debt of gratitude for diminishing the popularity of the phenomenon.

It was the young country star who finally knocked him off the top of the iTunes charts with her version of Miranda Lambert's Over You.

"That was really crazy; obviously I was really excited in general to get number one on iTunes, but I was excited about knocking Psy off. Not because I didn't like the song, it's catchy, what are you going to do?" Pope said with a laugh in a telephone interview. "I felt like if I could do that with a cover song, I could do it with my own songs."

That's just one chapter in what has been an incredible career journey, especially for someone who is just 24 years old. She achieved modest success as a member of the pop rock band Hey Monday before embarking on a solo career.

"I feel like I've gone through all these different lives already, even before that band I was in others and had gone through a lot of rejections and a lot of amazing experiences and a lot of not so amazing experiences."

Among the lessons Pope says she learned while navigating the treacherous waters of the music industry was to work hard and be ready for opportunity. In 2012 that meant auditioning for season three of the reality singing show The Voice.

"I went through a stage where I had too much pride and was in my band and didn't want to, quote unquote, sell out and do a show like The Voice. And I ended up doing it and realized it's not selling out. It's actually really hard."

The decision ended up being one of the best one she's ever made as she was coached by Blake Shelton to victory in the season, and along the way found her new style as a country singer.

But unlike many other music reality show winners, it seems like Pope's career has only gotten better since she claimed victory. She has sold two million singles and her album Frame by Frame went to number one on the U.S. country chart.

"I was really open-minded to go wherever the show would take me but I didn't really think about going back to my country music roots until the show took me there. It just was so natural and I owe that show everything."

Details

Tour. Cassadee Pope is opening for Dean Brody on a tour that brings her to Saskatoon on Feb. 13 to play TCU Place. She says she's already learned a lot from the Canadian country star, but the best lesson she received may surprisingly be fashion advice. She recently tweeted a photo of herself wearing a parka Brody had bought her for touring Canada in the winter.

American Idol runner-up Clay Aiken puts career on hold to run for Congress

Former American Idol runner-up Clay Aiken is running for Congress in North Carolina.

Aiken said Wednesday he'll seek the Democratic nomination for the seat currently held by Rep. Renee Ellmers.

The 35-year-old Aiken has been a special education teacher in Wake County. He says he decided to put his entertainment career on hold and seek to represent the state's 2nd Congressional District.

He says he considers Washington to be dysfunctional and will focus on jobs and the economy, as well as the importance of education. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clay Aiken. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Charlize Theron

Charlize contemplating marriage with new beau

Things are apparently moving pretty fast for new couple Charlize Theron and Sean Penn, as Penn has reportedly already moved into Theron's home and is contemplating matrimony, according to Radar Online.

"The two began talking about marriage in the last few weeks, after Sean moved into Charlize's house," a source says. "She has never wanted to get married, but seeing how Sean interacts with (her son) Jackson, she is having a change of heart.

"For the longest time, Charlize thought it was just going to be her and Jackson, and she was OK with that. For her to now be talking about getting married is a huge departure for Charlize."

Cher skips wedding over feud with son Elijah

Cher

Cher's ongoing feud with her son, Elijah Blue, and his new wife, Angie King, shows no sign of abating and recently resulted in Cher missing their wedding and excluding them from family holiday activities, Blue tells the National Enquirer.

"I've always been the black sheep of my family. We have lots of ups and downs, and now isn't the best time," says Blue, who married King in early December. "It's like a Mexican standoff, but we have a history."

The latest spat apparently results from an October falling out between Cher and her new daughter-in-law that prompted the Burlesque star to kick the pair out of her Malibu home.

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metro

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Selena sneaks off to rehab — for 'emotional issues'

Selena Gomez reportedly snuck away for a two-week stay at an Arizona rehab facility, though her rep insists to Radar Online it was for emotional issues.

"Selena voluntarily spent time at (Dawn at the) Meadows, but not for substance abuse," her rep says, though other sources insist the former Disney star has been "partying very hard" in the months leading up to her secret stay. "With fame came a partying lifestyle," says a source, while another adds that ex-boyfriend Justin Bieber probably wasn't helping matters. "Selena came to understand just what a bad influence Justin had been on her life," the second source says. "I don't know whether Justin pushed her to drug use, but amongst their close-knit group of friends, smoking was commonplace. Justin and Selena would smoke marijuana together regularly." METRO WORLD NEWS

Twitter

@TheRock
They sleep. We grind. #NoSnoozeButtonDammit

@ElizabethBanks
promised you immaturity on @TheDailyShow, and I believe I delivered.

@SaraKSilverman
When I search "Basketball sneakers, women" on @Amazon all that comes up is a high-heel sneaker wedge

Beckham gets a kick out of the fashion business

Let's talk about Becks. Whether you know him for his athletic skill or naked torso doesn't really matter at this point. David Beckham's empire is growing and no one is going to bring him (or his boxer briefs) down

Everybody knows who David Beckham is, either from his career as a football star or as the fashion icon and trendsetter he has become.

Metro Sweden's fashion editor Martin Hansson met David Beckham in New York to talk about the new collaboration with the Swedish fashion giant that premiered during the Super bowl weekend.

What has it been like to go from football player to a fashion icon?

I have always been very interested in clothes and style.

One day I love wearing a really tailored suit and the next day I like wearing what I'm wearing today: a pair of casual jeans and a sweater.

The opportunity to, in collaboration with H & M, produce an underwear collection that reflects my personal style feels natural and in tune with the times.

I dare you to deny that this man makes undies look good.
METRO WORLD NEWS

Your new collection, David Beckham for H & M, has been increased and is now aimed at younger boys as well. What message would you like to send to them?

Family first

Victoria loves the pictures and just thinks it's fun. But my sons like the exposure most of all and think it's great to see their daddy everywhere.
David Beckham on H&M campaign

I would like to tell them to go for their passion, work hard and stay focussed. I have always given 100 per cent in everything I do, both in football and in fashion. If you work hard enough and have fun at the same time there is a chance that you'll reach your dreams.

How does your wife Victoria feel about seeing you half naked on billboards and on TV all over the world?

(Laughs) Victoria loves the pictures and just thinks it's fun. But my sons like the exposure most of all and think it's great to see their daddy everywhere. I often wear the clothes from the new collection at home so they recognize it.

If you could look into your future, what do you hope to see?

I want to continue working with all that I'm doing today but also with new projects. Because I've played football the past 22 years it is refreshing to do something completely different now.

Get to know David

THE FACTS

Name: David Beckham

Age: 38

In the news: Has designed a new collection for H & M and is seen in a large campaign that premiered at the Super Bowl this weekend.

Lives: In Notting Hill, London

Family: Married to Victoria Beckham, four children.

Twitter

JEANNE SPACE
Jeanne Beker
life@metronews.ca

TWITTER HAS BECOME A COOL AND SUCCINCT WAY OF COMMUNICATING. IT ALLOWS ME TO BE ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY SPEAK MY MIND AND CONNECTS ME WITH ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S A FASHION QUESTION OR YOU JUST WANT TO COMMENT ON LIFE'S BIGGER PICTURE, I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

With my gorgeous makeup artist Kris Wares @Chanel who always makes me feel sooooo good! Prepping for @Cafawards #FUN

Moved to be celebrated in my own backyard! Thanks to my Canadian fashion family--for all your passion. @Cafawards

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Heather

Age: 29

Occupation: Freelance writer

What she's wearing: H&M scarf, Top Shop jacket, Gap shirt, BDG pants, LK Berlin bag and Top Shop shoes.

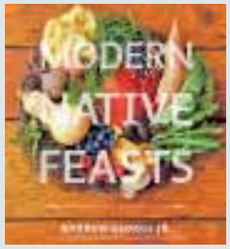
Her inspiration: The weather!

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT – AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM – AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

Oysters Rockefeller goes First Nations

Cookbook of the Week

Native eats for the 21st century



Full of healthy North American fare, Modern Native Feasts by Andrew George Jr. updates tradition for the 21st century. Native American cuisine comes of age in this collection that reinterprets and updates traditional Native recipes with modern, healthy twists. Andrew George Jr. was head chef for aboriginal foods at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. **METRO**

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

"I use this recipe to teach Aboriginal students a classical method of preparing seafood," writes Andrew George Jr. in his book Modern Native Feasts. "Using stinging nettles, dandelion greens, or sorrel instead of traditional spinach, gives a new twist to this dish"

1. Preheat broiler to high.

2. In frying pan, melt butter and sauté celery, onions, garlic, parsley, greens, and dash of Pernod. Stir constantly for about 3 minutes. Remove from heat.

Be careful

Take care when opening oysters. Protect your hand by wearing an oyster glove or covering a knife with a towel.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup (60 ml) unsalted butter
- 1 celery stalk, finely sliced
- 2 green onions, finely sliced
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- 1 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 1 cup (250 ml) finely chopped stinging nettles, dandelion greens, or sorrel leaves
- dash Pernod, or other anise-flavoured liqueur
- 2 slices fresh white bread, crusts removed, torn into pieces
- 12 fresh oysters in shell
- 1 tbsp Pernod
- rock salt, for serving
- 12 lemon wedges, to garnish
- 12 parsley sprigs, to garnish
- salt, to taste
- Tabasco sauce, to taste

This recipe makes 12 oysters (two to six servings, depending on how large they are and much your guests like oysters). TRACEY KUSIEWICZ OF FOODIE PHOTOGRAPHY (FOODIEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM)

3. In a blender, combine greens mixture with bread and process for about 30 seconds. Using an oyster knife, twist open shells and remove oysters. In a large bowl, toss oysters with 1 tbsp Pernod. Drain oysters and reserve liquid. Remove any shell fragments. Discard top shells, clean and dry bottom shells.

4. Line a baking tray with rock salt and place oyster shells on top. Place 1 oyster into each shell and spoon reserved liquid onto each. Spoon crumb mixture on top, completely covering each oyster. Broil for 1–2 minutes, until topping bubbles. Arrange oysters on a serving dish and garnish with sprigs of parsley and lemon wedges. Season oysters to taste with salt and/or Tabasco sauce.

RECIPE EXCERPTED FROM MODERN NATIVE FEASTS: HEALTHY, INNOVATIVE, SUSTAINABLE CUISINE BY ANDREW GEORGE JR. (PUBLISHED BY ARSENAL PULP PRESS, 2013).

Vanquish the darkest days of winter with bright lighting

DIY. Want to up the visual appeal of any room? A lighting plan is the place to start

Track lighting can help draw attention to bookcases or artwork. ISTOCK

The dark days of winter can be hard to bear, but don't wait for the summer sun to shed some light inside your home. Effective lighting is often overlooked during renovations, but it can turn a boring room into a dynamic, year-round oasis.

Since electrical work is extremely dangerous and regulated provincially, it's always recommended to hire a certified electrician for installation, but that doesn't mean you can't have fun dreaming up your best-lit space.

Guiding light

The first step to improve a room's lighting is to define its purpose. For example, kitchens need bright light around countertops to safely prepare food and read recipes. Living rooms need to be more flexible and accommodate activities like reading or watching a movie. Consider what each room is used for before deciding on what kind of lighting to install.

Layering lights in a variety of locations produces a softer glow than using one central bright light. ISTOCK

Layer lights

To make a room more visually interesting, incorporate lighting at different heights. In the kitchen, recessed lights can be complemented with lights under the cabinets and pendant lights above an island.

This technique produces a softer glow than one central and bright light, resulting in a more relaxing atmosphere. Wall sconces add an appealing visual aesthetic to almost any room and are great for adding symmetry around fireplaces, mirrors or beds.

Highlight key areas

Draw attention to artwork, bookshelves or a unique decorative object by strategically placing lights to highlight these pieces. Track lighting is a practical solution that allows individual lights to be easily moved and aimed in different directions.

Installing dimmers can also help make a room's lighting options more flexible and set the mood for everything from a romantic dinner to family game nights.

Don't leave design in the dark

While lighting placement is important, the design of the fixtures is equally significant. Pay careful attention to proportions and avoid dwarfing a dining room table with an oversized chandelier, or adding a vintage lamp to a modern room. With replaceable shades, lamps are a great investment that can be updated as styles change. For hanging lights, pick a stylish design with an understated colour so attention isn't directed toward the ceiling.

Rescue My Renovation

- For more bright renovation ideas, tune in to Rescue My Renovation, Wednesdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.

Hockey

Stamkos ruled out for Olympics

Steven Stamkos will not play for Team Canada at the Sochi Olympics after tests revealed Wednesday that his broken right leg is not completely healed.

Tampa Bay Lightning doctors said they couldn't clear him to play after examining his most recent CT scan and will re-evaluate his condition again in two to three weeks.

It's a big blow for the 23-year-old, who had been optimistic earlier this week that he might be able to play by as soon as Saturday.

"Today is obviously very disappointing for me," Stamkos said in a release. "I honestly believe that we did everything possible in order to have my injured leg ready in time for the Olympics, but I realize you can't force healing. I know, in the best interest of my long-term health, I cannot represent Canada in Sochi, as much as I would like to."

Lightning general manager Steve Yzerman, who is also Team Canada's executive director, said Stamkos "should not be participating in game action at any time in the near future."

"Although the doctor was very pleased to this point with the healing process, he explained that the callus surrounding the fracture site is not 100 per cent consolidated, and Steven will not be cleared to play in a game until that happens," said Yzerman. "It was a pretty clear-cut decision, no grey areas at all."

Hockey Canada did not immediately announce a replacement for Stamkos, though Claude Giroux, Lightning teammate Martin St. Louis and James Neal figured to be the leading candidates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Steven Stamkos GETTY IMAGES FILE

Roughriders head coach Corey Chamblin was named the CFL coach of the year in Ottawa on Wednesday. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Chamblin fulfils coaching prophecy

CFL. Coach of the year award won by the Roughriders' leader

The moment Corey Chamblin first started thinking about becoming a CFL head coach came while he was breaking down game film with Jim Barker years ago when the two were with the Calgary Stampeders.

They were watching tape during the 2008 Grey Cup when Barker, himself a former coach, was then Calgary's senior vice-president of football operations and player-personnel director. Barker turned to the young assistant and made what Chamblin thought at the time was a terribly bold prediction.

"He said, 'You'll be a better head coach than an assistant coach, and if you don't decide to go to the NFL and you stay in this league, you'll definitely be a head coach," Chamblin recalls. "And I was like, 'Jim, you're crazy.'"

But Barker's words were prophetic. On Wednesday, Chamblin was named the CFL's coach of the year.

The 36-year-old received the Annis Stukus Trophy after leading the Saskatchewan Roughriders to a Grey Cup win on home turf in only his second season with the club.

The Riders finished second in the West Division standings with an 11-7 record. They defeated B.C. 29-25 in the conference semifinal before upsetting first-place Calgary — which posted a league-best 14-4 record — in the West Division final 35-13.

That victory earned Saskatchewan home-field advantage for the Grey Cup game, which was held at Mosaic Stadium. Before a rabid gathering of 44,710, the Riders didn't disappoint, capping their season with an impressive 45-23 victory over the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

Before coaching jobs with the Riders and the Stampeders, Chamblin broke into the CFL as a defensive backs coach with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers in 2007.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The runner-ups

Kent Austin, Hamilton's head coach/GM, and John Hufnagel, who also holds the same dual post with Calgary, were the award finalists.

Dressler gets his shot in NFL with Chiefs

The Chiefs have signed Canadian Football League star Weston Dressler to a futures contract, hoping he can bolster a relatively weak wide receiver corps.

The 28-year-old Dressler has spent the past six years in the CFL, where he caught 442 passes for 6,531 yards and 43 touchdowns for the Saskatchewan Roughriders. He caught 70 passes for more than 1,000 yards and nine TDs in helping the Roughriders win the Grey Cup last season.

The Chiefs have not announced the signing, which appeared on the NFL's transaction report.

Dressler was a standout at North Dakota but never generated much interest from the NFL. He is listed at five-foot-seven, 179 pounds.

The Chiefs could be looking at Dressler to replace wide receiver Dexter McCluster, who is due to become a free agent. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former Roughriders receiver Weston Dressler has signed a contract with the Chiefs in the NFL. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

4 SPORTS

Greater in Year 8?

Kaillie Humphries and Heather Moyse practise a run at the Sanki Sliding Centre on Wednesday in Sochi, Russia. ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Bobsled. She's dominated the circuit since winning gold in 2010, and Calgarian says she might have another gear for Sochi

Kaillie Humphries won Olympic bobsled gold four years ago and has finished first at the last two world championships.

In what should give her rivals cause for concern in Sochi, she is just now hitting her peak.

"They say it takes eight to 10 years to build a really good bobsleigh pilot," Humphries said. "I'm at year eight right now."

The timing seems to be lining up perfectly for the 28-year-old. She has won three World Cup titles this season and is in her usual perch on top of the overall standings.

She reunited with brakewoman Heather Moyse of Summerside, P.E.I., and they opened the campaign with an impressive win in Calgary.

Triumphant underdogs four years ago in Vancouver, now they're the team to beat.

"She's got great expectations," Canadian coach Tom De La Hunty said of Humphries. "She's won the last two world championships. So at the top level, she knows how to deal with the pressure and the pressure is going to be great this time I'll tell you."

Humphries has emerged as one of the faces of the Canadian team in the lead-up to Sochi. It's a position she seems to enjoy.

The Canadian bobsled team attended a half-hour introductory news conference Wednesday at the Gorki Media Centre in Sochi. Humphries stayed for an extra 20 minutes, holding court with reporters in her friendly and engaging manner.

The spotlight shines brightest every four years and Humphries is ready.

"Mentally I'm stronger," she said. "Physically I feel like I'm in a great position right now. Overall it takes a whole package. It's about balance, it's not just one aspect. I'm definitely a lot more well-rounded. I still get tested, I still have my moments when I fail those tests.

"I still am learning a lot in the position that I'm in."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Zen in a bullet

"You have to be able to feel, you have to be able to see. So on the track walk I'm able to see things slowed down. I'm able to look at things exactly as they are."

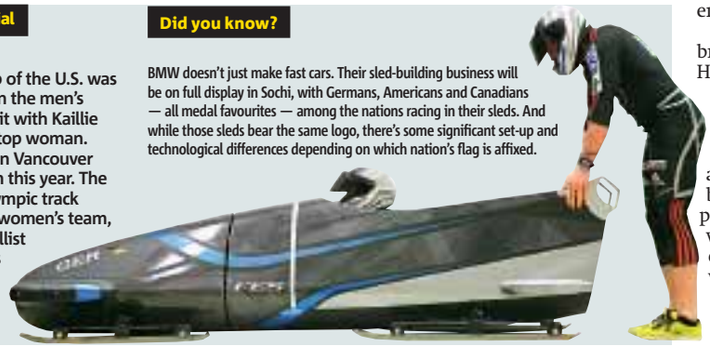
Kaillie Humphries, on racing down a bobsled run at 130 km/h.

Repeat potential

Steven Holcomb of the U.S. was the top driver on the men's World Cup circuit with Kaillie Humphries the top woman. Both won gold in Vancouver and might again this year. The U.S. has two Olympic track athletes on the women's team, with gold medallist Lauryn Williams and Lolo Jones qualifying as push athletes.

Did you know?

BMW doesn't just make fast cars. Their sled-building business will be on full display in Sochi, with Germans, Americans and Canadians — all medal favourites — among the nations racing in their sleds. And while those sleds bear the same logo, there's some significant set-up and technological differences depending on which nation's flag is affixed.



Canadian flag-raising

'Sense of majesty' at welcome party

As the sun set over Russia's Black Sea, it shined on the Canadian flag just as it was hitting the top of the flagpole with the national anthem playing in the background.

It marked an unofficial start at the Sochi Olympics for Canada. It didn't take long for chef de mission Steve Podborski to stop thinking about red and white and start dreaming about gold.

"When the Canadian flag went up, the sun is glaring on it, it blows out and you can see the Maple Leaf and I'm thinking, 'I'm sure we're going to hear more of that,'" he said. "It was really, really great."

Before the flag went up, about a hundred Canadian athletes marched into the city's international plaza. They watched the Choir of Siberia sing and dance and a Russian honour guard march beside the stage.

It was an expression of Russian culture two days before the official opening ceremony in Sochi.

"The Russians really bring a sense of majesty and something big to a ceremony like this," Podborski said. "It was really charming."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Team Canada is welcomed by the official flag-raising ceremony on Wednesday in Sochi. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Olympic relay. Flame reaches final destination

The Olympic flame reached Sochi Wednesday, following a 65,000-kilometre route, the longest in the history of the Games.

The relay generated genuine public enthusiasm, featuring famous cultural figures, athletes and other celebrities, and drawing big crowds across Russia.

But it also has seen some spectacular gaffes, with the flame flickering out on dozens of occasions and, in some cases, even engulfing the bearers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Record-setting journey

The relay started in Moscow on Oct. 7 and stopped at more than 130 cities and towns across Russia. Along the way, the torch travelled to:

- **The North Pole.** Aboard a nuclear-powered icebreaker, the ceremony involved torch bearers from eight Arctic nations.
- **Outer space.** On Nov. 7, a rocket carried the torch to the International Space Station. Cosmonauts Oleg Kotov and Sergei Ryazanskiy then took the torch on an unprecedented spacewalk Nov. 9. For safety reasons, the torch didn't burn aboard the ISS.
- **Europe and Russia's highest mountain.** Russian mountaineers lit the torch atop Mount Elbrus — at 18,510 feet — the highest mountain in Russia and Europe.
- **The world's deepest lake.** In November, divers plunged into Lake Baikal, the world's biggest and deepest freshwater lake, with special torches burning underwater.

Snowboarding

White bails on slopestyle event

Shaun White pulled out of the Olympic slopestyle contest Wednesday after being dinged up on a course that riders are criticizing as unduly harsh. His decision ends an anticipated matchup with Canadian star Mark McMorris. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Show someone how much you really love them.
Everyone Welcome
Reserve your special dinner now at the Saskatoon Golf & Country Club
Friday, February 14th, 2014
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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Something will happen today that takes you by surprise but if you stand back and look at it in an objective light, you will see it had to occur. Chances are a few weeks from now, you will be glad it happened.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Do you go out and have fun or do you stay in and get work done? If you are smart — you will sacrifice short-term enjoyment for long-term peace of mind.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You have thought about what you are planning and all you need to do now is get on with it. Don't worry that certain people may not approve. Most likely they're jealous.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
As Mercury turns retrograde today don't take anything for granted. But the world should not take you for granted either. Do something out of character, something no one would ever expect of you.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Unexpected events will disrupt your routine today and you won't be happy about it. But as there is nothing you can do to change things there's not much point getting uptight about it, is there? Stay calm and carry on.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If a colleague makes an error and causes you problems today, don't make a big deal of it. Everyone makes mistakes so do what you can do make them feel better.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
There will be disorder today, most likely at work. Colleagues may discover that they are not up to keeping the promises they made. You could see it coming, so you won't be fazed.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may have to be abrupt with certain people today, simply because they are too slow to work things out for themselves. Don't bruise egos for fun but make sure what needs to get done does.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
With mind planet Mercury beginning one of its retrograde phases there is simply no point rushing to get things done. In the greater scheme of things, they're really not that important.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Be careful when dealing with those whose outlook on life is different to yours. If you adopt the attitude that you're always right and they're always wrong, conflict is inevitable.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You try to be honest in your dealings but you just can't get through to people. This is likely to be a theme of the next few weeks while Mercury moves retrograde, so get used to it.

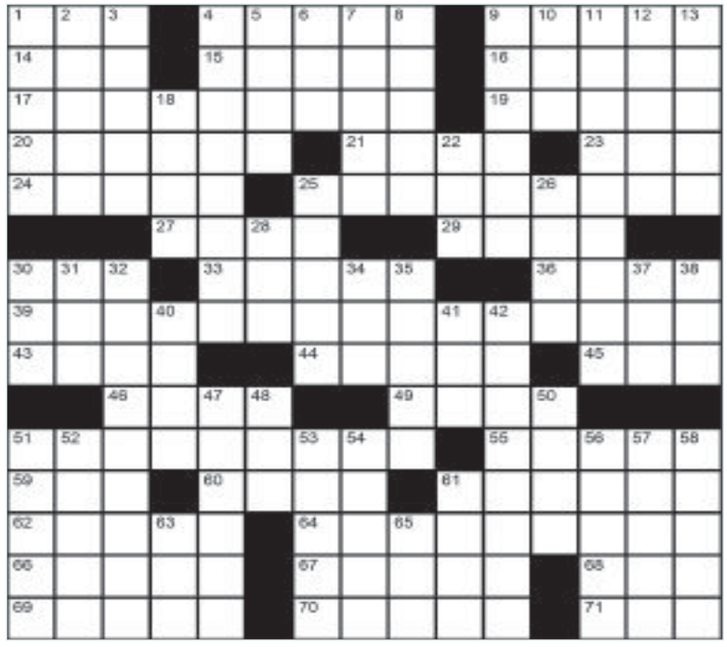
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You're hardly a decisive person and with Mercury, planet of communication and the mind, turning retrograde in your sign today you will change your mind yet again. Others won't like it but you are who you are.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

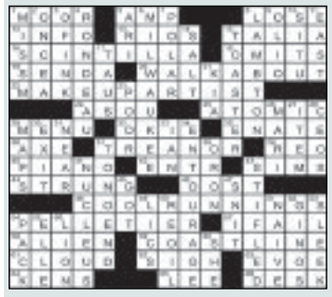
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Not near
4. Played over
9. "Batman" star Adam, and surnamesakes
14. Tenn. neighbour
15. Southwestern Ontario gorge village
16. Sir Newton
17. Wayne and Shuster: 2 wds.
19. Steamy spot
20. Geena's 1991 title role
21. Captain Hook's sidekick
23. Wine aperitif
24. Coffee brand
25. Helmet part: 2 wds.
27. Simon Cowell's production company
29. Athena's walkway
30. "__ sure be nice if..."
33. Some sound
36. Feminine suffix
39. PEI is geographically unique because it what?: 3 wds.
43. Uni
44. Also, in Montreal
45. Kit
46. "Wow."
49. Ages
51. Certain classical composer
55. Ms. Knightley
59. Marion __ (Pioneering female aviator of Canada, b.1918 - d.1995)
60. Use red pen
61. Did a sports team transaction
62. __-toothed tiger
64. Canadian actor who plays Captain Renard on "Grimm": 2 wds.
66. Carpeting 'spot'
67. "We Can Work __" by The Beatles
68. Navigator's dir.
69. Goes up-and-down in weight
70. Crowned heads in Russia, once
71. Brit's thank yous

Down
1. Actualities
2. Hawaiian hi
3. Noodle dish
4. Eddie __, Marius in "Les Miserables" (2012)
5. "Air Force One" (1997) actor Mr. Baskin
6. Towels holder
7. In _ __ (Hurried)
8. Ms. Watts
9. Most sage
10. Conductor, __-Pekka Salonen
11. Bigg Soxx: Canadian rapper on new song "Heroes" feat. Choclair, prod. by C4ENT.
12. Actress Ms. Raymonde
13. Cliff type
18. Deer sorts
22. Ells and Ems followers
25. __ _ phrase
26. Steel-__ boots
28. Lettuce variety
30. Doctrine
31. Even if, briefly
32. Splashy '80s Canadian series: 2 wds.
34. Old French coin
35. Actor, Buddy __
37. Three, in Turin
38. Ballpark fig.
40. Tooth part
41. Bear, in Barcelona
42. Hockey arena regulars, colloquially: 2 wds.
47. Martin and Charlie
48. Brick carrier
50. Char, in cooking
51. Domineering
52. Lyre-playing Muse
53. Sojourn
54. Mona Lisa's room at the Louvre in Paris, Salle des __
56. Boomtown Rats' "_ __ Like Mondays"
57. Queen: Spanish
58. Tools for woodworkers
61. Wee weekday
63. "Blame It on __" (1984)
65. "___ guy walks into..."

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	7	1	2		3	4	5	
5	2						6	8
		3	9		2	8		
	6			4			2	
		5	3		7	6		
3	4						8	1
	9	7	5		1	2	4	

Yesterday's Sudoku

3	6	1	5	4	2	9	7	8
4	7	5	9	3	8	2	1	6
2	8	9	7	1	6	3	5	4
7	9	2	1	6	5	4	8	3
5	1	3	2	8	4	6	9	7
8	4	6	3	9	7	1	2	5
1	3	8	4	7	9	5	6	2
6	2	4	8	5	1	7	3	9
9	5	7	6	2	3	8	4	1

Today
-16°/-24°
Partly cloudy
Friday
-15°/-27°
Variable
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Check the 14 day trend.
TWN incorporates MSC data

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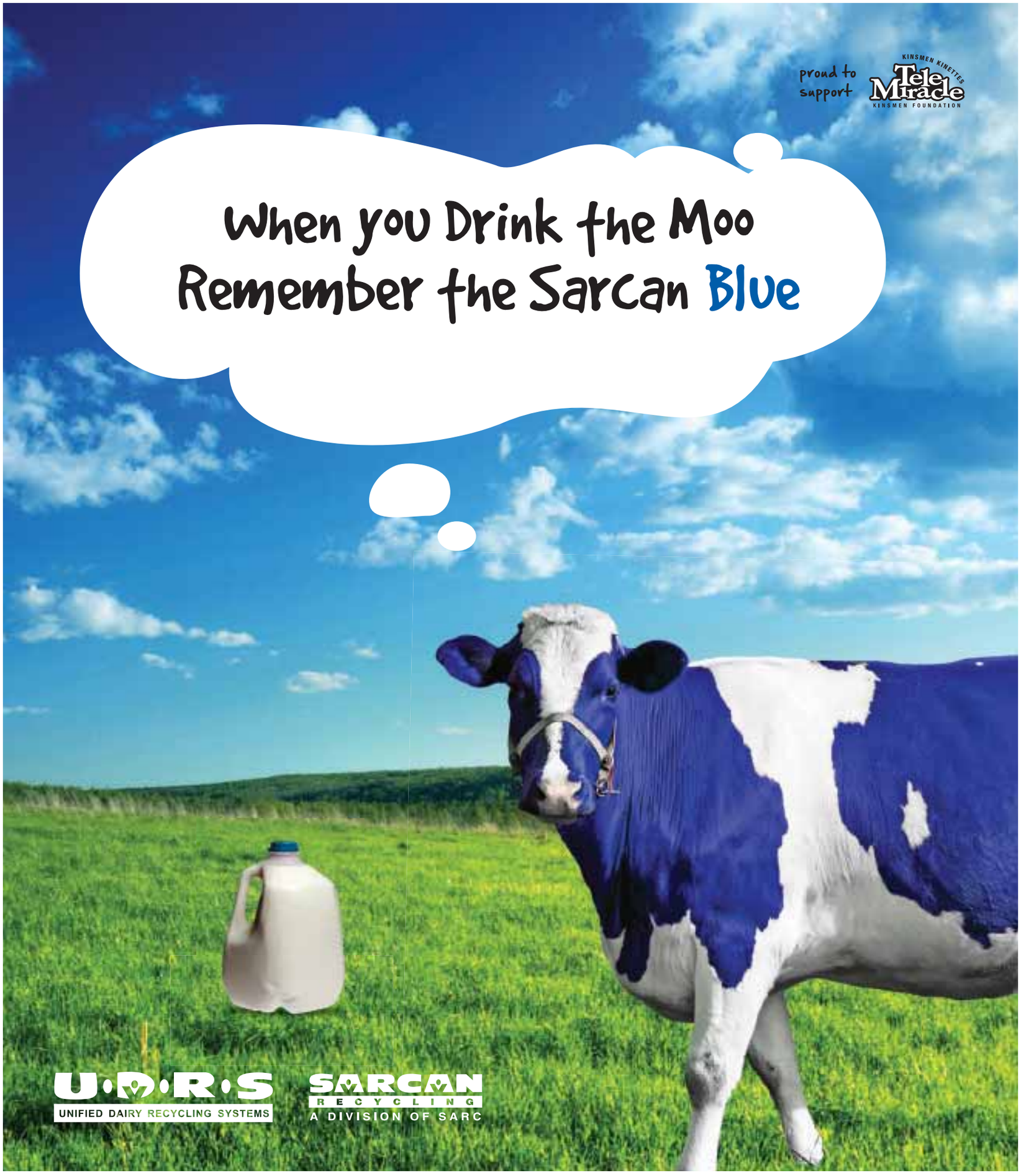
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